

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-8 and 11-13 are pending in the above-identified application. Support for the significant changes to claims 1 and 2, as well as for new claim 13, is found in the descriptions of "Embodiment (1)" and "Embodiment (2)" at pages 4-7 of the specification. It is submitted that all of the presently pending claims are fully supported by the original disclosure of the present application, introduce no new matter, and should be entered of record in connection with this application.

Issues Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 103(a)

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kobayashi '669 (USP 5,240,669).

Claims 2 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kobayashi '669, either alone, or further in view of Hugger '280 (USP 3,443,280).

The above-noted rejections are traversed for the following reasons.

Distinctions Between Present Invention and Kobayashi '669

Kobayashi '669 discloses a method for vulcanizing an elastomeric product, such as a tire, which includes various

pressurizing and heating steps. Kobayashi '669 discloses at column 7, lines 11-14 that the described method can prevent air from being trapped between the mold and the product.

Kobayashi '669 fails to disclose or suggest employing the introduction of a heating medium into the inside of an elastomeric article, wherein the pressure of the heating medium is changed over at least two cycles including a decrease of short duration and an increase of short duration over one cycle as recited in claim 1. Kobayashi '669 further fails to disclose the cyclic changes in pressure with regard to employment of a pressurizing medium as recited in claim 2 and as recited in new claim 13, so as to include decreases and increases of short duration over one cycle. Consequently, Kobayashi '669 fails to recognize the advantageous decrease in defective moldings as evidenced by the comparative tests results between Examples 1 and 2 of Figure 1 (present invention) as compared to the Reference Example of Figure 5 as described and shown at pages 9-10 of the specification, including Table 1 (page 10). Consequently, significant patentable distinctions exist between the present invention and Kobayashi '669.

Distinctions Between Present Invention and Hugger '280

Hugger '280 discloses an apparatus for curing tires which includes a description at column 8, line 71 to column 9, line 51 of an operation system wherein steam is introduced into a tire bladder cavity at, for example, 5-20 pulses per minute (column 9, lines 24-30).

Hugger '280 fails to disclose or suggest employing the introduction of a heating medium into the inside of an elastomeric article, wherein the pressure of the heating medium is changed over at least two cycles including a decrease of short duration and an increase of short duration over one cycle as recited in claim 1. In this regard, note that Hugger '280 employs "pulses" which only increase pressure and do not "decrease" pressure during a cycle. Hugger '280 further fails to disclose the cyclic changes in pressure with regard to employment of a pressurizing medium as recited in claim 2 and as recited in new claim 13, so as to include decreases and increases of short duration over one cycle. Consequently, Hugger '280 fails to recognize the advantageous decrease in defective moldings as evidenced by the comparative tests results between Examples 1 and 2 of Figure 1 (present invention) as compared to the Reference Example of Figure 5 as described and shown at pages 9-10 of the specification, including Table 1 (page 10).

Consequently, significant patentable distinctions exist between the present invention and Hugger '280.

Conclusion

It is submitted for the reasons stated above that the present claims define patentable subject matter such that this application should now be placed condition for allowance.

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicants hereby petition for an extension of three (3) months to April 28, 2004, in which to file a reply to the Office Action. The required fee of \$950.00 is enclosed herewith.

If any questions arise regarding the above matters, please contact Applicant's representative, Andrew D. Meikle (Reg. No. 32,868), in the Washington Metropolitan Area at the phone number listed below.


If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees

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required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of
time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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